



# **Firearm Violence In South Carolina**

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## **Executive Summary**

The findings of this report were based on an analysis of incident reports filled out by responding law enforcement officers. These incident reports are collected and maintained by the State Law Enforcement Division in the South Carolina Incident Based Reporting System (SCIBRS). This report looked at violent crime in which firearms were involved, from 1996 through 1999. The operational definition of violence included the following offenses: murder, negligent homicide, suicide, rape, forcible sodomy, sexual assault with an object, forcible fondling, robbery, aggravated assault and kidnapping. Information concerning suicide and justifiable homicide was also analyzed, but is not included in criminal offense totals. It is important to note that firearm involvement does not mean that the weapon was fired or discharged, but rather that a firearm was present in the commission of the offense.

Firearm violence in South Carolina consisted primarily of aggravated assault and robbery. Criminal homicide made up about 2% of the total, and forcible sex offenses account for even less. The victims of these violent crimes were disproportionately Black. They were also predominately male and young adults. Overall, the victimization rate for minority males was much higher than any other group.

Firearm violence was more likely to occur at a private residence than elsewhere, although a considerable amount of firearm violence also occurred on public thoroughfares. Criminal firearm violence occurred most often among strangers, while firearm violence among family members or within romantic relationships was relatively infrequent. Handguns were much more likely to be the weapon involved in firearm violence than any other type of gun. The use of shotguns, rifles and other firearms was infrequent.

Similar to the victims, perpetrators of firearm violence were more often male than female and more often Black than White. Juveniles had a much lower arrest rate than adults, and among adults the arrest rate was highest among the 18 to 21 age group. A particularly important finding was the level of danger presented by these offenders not only to the victims but also to the apprehending law enforcement officers. Slightly more than 10% of those arrested had firearms in their possession at the time of arrest.

The major limitation of this analysis was the inability to address important questions beyond the scope of SCIBRS data, particularly questions concerning the criminal records of firearm violence perpetrators, how weapons were procured and more detailed demographic information about firearm violence victims and perpetrators. The primary benefit of the study was providing an initial baseline of data concerning firearm violence as well as providing the basis for further study.

## **Firearm Violence in South Carolina**

Concerns over the perceived level of firearm violence have been a source of both controversy and contention. Issues surrounding the use of firearms, both by the general population and specific sub-populations such as juveniles, convicted criminals, the mentally ill or gang members have been the subject of much debate. Legislation at both the state and federal levels, designed to limit the availability of firearms for criminal purposes have been proposed and in some cases, adopted in recent years. Considering the potential for serious harm and death from firearms, these concerns are certainly understandable. Unfortunately, at times the intensity of these concerns generates more heat than light.

The intent of this report is to utilize the South Carolina Incident Based Reporting System (SCIBRS) to provide an initial baseline of data concerning firearm violence. This baseline will include information concerning the degree to which firearm violence occurs, a limited demographic overview of those who are involved in firearm violence and some additional information concerning the general nature of firearm violence. In so doing, the intent is to contribute further to a body of knowledge that can be brought to bear on a this deadly serious problem.

## Methodology

For the purpose of this report, a broad definition of violence has been employed. The operational definition of violence includes any incident or victimization in which an individual was the victim and a firearm was listed as one of the weapons involved in the incident. This definition resulted in the following offenses being included: murder, negligent homicide, justifiable homicide, suicide, rape, forcible sodomy, sexual assault with an object, forcible fondling, robbery, aggravated assault and kidnapping. While neither justifiable homicide nor suicide are routinely counted as criminal offenses, their inclusion serves to increase the level of information available concerning firearm violence. It is also important to note that firearm involvement does not mean that the weapon was fired or discharged. It simply means that a firearm was present in the commission of the offense.

Incident reports are compiled by law enforcement officers whenever a criminal incident comes to their attention. These reports contain much of the basic information pertaining to the incident, information concerning who was victimized, what if any weapons were involved, what sort of offense took place as well as other information. These reports are forwarded to SLED for entry into the SCIBRS data set. SCIBRS data for calendar years 1996, 1997, 1998 and 1999 provided the basis for this analysis. Data were taken from the victim segment of the record and linked to the offense segment as needed to provide information required for analysis. Links were made on the basis of case numbers. This particular analysis is based on data from the 1999 end of year file tape, a file which consists of all incidents as they were reported to SLED by the cutoff date for data entry. Since SLED maintains a two-year window for updates, edits and corrections, this file will be replaced next year by a file, which will contain any such actions that occur during 2000.

One of the more complex issues in dealing with SCIBRS data is selecting the most meaningful unit of count for the analysis. This report uses incident counts, victim counts and arrest counts. Because the number of victims, offenders arrested, weapons involved and other factors can vary with each incident, it is often difficult to understand the relationship between totals based on different units of count. Consequently, this report seeks to minimize the units of count in order to provide the most meaningful information in each situation. To add to the complexity, offenses in SCIBRS can be counted in one of two ways: as part of a hierarchy based on the most serious offense or each offense can be counted separately. In this report, incidents are reported on the basis of a hierarchy (a non-duplicated count based on the most serious offense), but victims and arrests are counted individually, for each offense.

It is important to understand that there are limitations to the SCIBRS data set. First, SCIBRS does not have any means of identifying individuals, therefore at present these data cannot be linked to other data sets which might provide information beyond that collected on the incident report. Second, SCIBRS can only provide information concerning reported events. Incidents which are not reported to law enforcement, are not included. It is certainly reasonable to believe that some unknown number of violent incidents involving firearms occurred during this time period, but were not reported.

## Findings

### State Overview

A total of 41,878 violent incidents in which firearms were involved were reported to law enforcement from 1996 through 1999.

**Table 1**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Incidents</b>	<b>Rate</b>	<b>Pct. Change</b>
1996	10,803	28.89	
1997	11,009	29.05	+0.5%
1998	10,211	26.59	-8.4%
1999	9,855	25.36	-4.6%

Note: Rate per 10,000 population.

Source: SCIBRS, SLED; Population estimates, B&CB ORS.

There were 43,206 victims of firearm violence in South Carolina from 1996 through 1999. Aggravated assault and robbery accounted for more than 90% of victims of firearm violence. Victims of aggravated assault accounted for 61.2% of firearm violence victims, followed by robbery victims who accounted for 32.6%.

**Table 2**  
**Firearm Violence Victims by Offense**

<b>Offense</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Pct.</b>
Murder	846	2.0
Negligent Homicide	27	0.1
Suicide	407	0.9
Justifiable Homicide	56	0.1
Rape	203	0.5
Forcible Sodomy	43	0.1
Sexual Assault w/ Object	11	<0.1
Forcible Fondling	15	<0.1
Robbery	14,090	32.6
Aggravated Assault	26,453	61.2
Kidnapping	1,055	2.4

Source: SCIBRS, SLED.



The SCIBRS offense codes were collapsed into the following crime categories: criminal homicide which includes murder and negligent homicide, suicide, justifiable homicide, forcible sex offenses which includes rape, forcible sodomy, sexual assault with an object and forcible fondling, robbery, aggravated assault and kidnapping.

**Table 3**  
**Firearm Violence Victims by Offense Category**

<b>Offense</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Pct.</b>
Criminal Homicide	873	2.0%
Suicide	407	0.9%
Justifiable Homicide	56	0.1%
Forcible Sex Offenses	272	0.6%
Robbery	14,090	32.7%
Aggravated Assault	26,453	61.3%
Kidnapping	1,055	2.4%

Source: SCIBRS, SLED.

For the purpose of this report, criminal firearm violence refers to the above crime categories, with the exceptions of suicide and justifiable homicide. Handguns were the firearms most frequently used in criminal firearm victimization, accounting for 83.6% of cases. Shotguns were the second most frequently reported firearms, accounting for 9.8% of cases.

**Table 4**  
**Type of Weapon Use in Criminal Firearm Victimization**

<b>Weapon</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Pct.</b>
Handgun	32,439	83.6
Shotgun	3,814	9.8
Rifle	2,089	5.4
Other firearm	462	1.2

Note: There were 3,939 cases in which the type of firearm was unknown.  
Source: SCIBRS, SLED.

Victims of criminal firearm violence ranged from newborn children to the very elderly. The mean age was 30 years and the median age was 27 years of age. The highest victimization rate was found among 18 to 21 years of age. The lowest victimization rate was found among those 65 years of age or older.

**Table 5**  
**Criminal Firearm Victimization by Age Group**

<b>Age Group</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Pct.</b>	<b>Rate</b>
0 - 5	639	1.5	5.18
6 - 12	699	1.6	4.66
13 - 17	3,913	9.2	35.73
18 - 21	7,765	18.2	88.14
22 - 24	4,598	10.8	70.89
25 - 34	11,541	27.0	50.83
35 - 44	7,652	17.9	31.13
45 - 54	3,644	8.5	18.31
55 - 64	1,469	3.4	11.11
65 & older	801	1.9	4.32

Note: Rate per 10,000 victims within the corresponding age group.

Source: SCIBRS, SLED; Population estimates, B&CB ORS.

Victims are identified as members of one of four (4) racial categorizations under SCIBRS: Asian, Black, Native American and White. Additionally, if the victim's racial identify cannot be discerned, the racial category is defined as being unknown. Blacks accounted for 55.5% of criminal firearm victims, Whites accounted for 43.8% of firearm victims. Asians and Native Americans accounted for less than 1% of firearm victims.

**Table 6**  
**Criminal Firearm Violence Victims by Race**

<b>Race</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Pct.</b>
Asian	217	0.5
Black	23,607	55.5
Native American	105	0.2
White	18,636	43.8

Note: There were 178 cases in which the victim's race was unknown.

Source: SCIBRS, SLED.

For the purpose of determining victimization rates, the SCIBRS defined racial categories were collapsed into two racial groups. Asian, Black and Native American victims were grouped together as Non-White. Cases in which the victim's race was unknown were treated as missing data. Non-Whites experienced higher victimization rates from two to three times higher than Whites each year from 1996 through 1999. The overall victimization rate for Non-Whites was 50.5 per 10,000 compared to 17.72 for Whites.

**Table 7**  
**Criminal Firearm Victimization Rates by Racial Group**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Non-White</b>	<b>White</b>
1996	54.15	18.24
1997	53.29	18.86
1998	48.01	17.62
1999	46.71	16.22
Total	50.50	17.72

Note: Rate per 10,000 within the corresponding racial group.  
Source: SCIBRS, SLED; Population estimates, B&CB ORS.

Victim ethnicity is recorded separately from race in SCIBRS. There are two ethnic categories: Hispanic and Non-Hispanic. If ethnicity cannot be determined it is reported as unknown. Among firearm violence victims, 0.8% were reported to be Hispanic, 94.2% were reported to be Non-Hispanic and the remaining 5% were of unknown ethnicity.

Victims of criminal firearm violence were more often male (64.1%) than female (35.9%).

**Table 8**  
**Criminal Firearm Violence Victims by Sex**

<b>Sex</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Pct.</b>
Female	15,329	35.9
Male	27,343	64.1

Note: There were 71 cases in which victim sex was unknown.  
Source: SCIBRS, SLED.

The criminal firearm victimization rate for males from 1996 through 1999 was 37.18 per 10,000, compared to a rate of 19.40 for females.

**Table 9**  
**Criminal Firearm Victimization Rates by Sex**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>
1996	19.90	39.83
1997	20.52	39.43
1998	19.07	35.78
1999	18.17	33.82
Total	19.40	37.18

Note: Rate per 10,000 within the corresponding sex.

Source: SCIBRS, SLED; Population estimates, B&CB ORS.

Non-White males had the highest overall firearm victimization rate, 71.59 per 10,000. Non-White females ranked second (32.26), followed by White males (22.34) and White females (13.29).

**Table 10**  
**Criminal Firearm Victimization Rates by Race/Sex**

	<b>Non-White</b>	<b>Non-White</b>	<b>White</b>	<b>White</b>
<b>Year</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>
1996	34.20	77.01	13.04	23.66
1997	33.21	76.31	14.47	23.45
1998	31.26	67.92	13.32	22.10
1999	30.43	65.32	12.35	20.24
Total	32.26	71.59	13.29	22.34

Note: Rate per 10,000 within the corresponding race/sex.

Source: SCIBRS, SLED; Population estimates, B&CB ORS.

SCIBRS allows for reporting twenty-six different relationships between the victim and the offender. For the purpose of this report, the victim to offender relationship categories were collapsed into five groups: family relationships, romantic relationships, ex-spouses, known to the victim and not known to the victim. Family relationships included spouses, common-law spouses, parents, step-parents, children, step-children, siblings, step-siblings, grandparents, grandchildren, in-laws and other family members. Romantic relationships included the categories of boyfriend and homosexual relationships. The group ex-spouse included only ex-spouses. The group known to the victim included the following: acquaintance, friend, employer, employee, neighbor, baby-sittee (the child

taken care of) and otherwise known. The group stranger included only strangers. The category relationship unknown was treated as missing data. Strangers were involved in criminal firearm victimization more than any other relationship group accounting for 43.5% of cases, followed by the category, known to the victim which accounted for 38.1% of all cases.

**Table 11**  
**Relationship of Criminal Firearm Violence Victims to Offenders**

<b>Victim to Offender Relationship Group</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Pct.</b>
Stranger	16,351	43.5
Known to victim	14,300	38.1
Family	5,113	13.6
Romantic	1,631	4.3
Ex-spouse	173	0.5

Note: There were 5,175 cases in which the victim of offender relationship was unknown.  
Source: SCIBRS, SLED

The most often reported location type at which firearm victimization occurred was at a residence or home. This location category accounted for 38.6% of victims. That was followed by the location category of highway/road/alley, which accounted for 23.4%.

**Table 12**  
**Location of Criminal Firearm Violence**

<b>Location</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Pct.</b>
Residence/home	16,503	38.6
Highway/road/alley	9,986	23.4
Convenience store	2,351	5.5
Apartment/condo	2,317	5.4
Commercial/office bldg.	2,169	5.1
Bar/night club	1,565	3.7
Restaurant	1,431	3.3
Parking lot/garage	1,413	3.3
Hotel/motel	948	2.2
Other/unknown	841	2.0
Grocery	541	1.3
Bank/S&L	489	1.1
Gas station	442	1.0
All other locations	1,747	4.1

Note: All other locations consists of 15 location codes, each of which accounted for less than 1% of all cases.

Source: SCIBRS, SLED

SCIBRS collects basic data concerning non-fatal injuries inflicted on crime victims. The following represents the most serious injury reported per victim based on the reporting officer's observation, for those cases in which an injury was reported. It does not include death (homicide victims) as a category. It is important to note that these data are based only upon the officer's observations, and should not be considered the equivalent to the observations of trained medical personnel. The injury category, minor injuries, refers to injuries where medical aid was not indicated. The injury category, other major injury, refers to injuries where medical aid was reasonably expected. The injury category, unconsciousness, refers to the victim being knocked out, not simply fainting. Among those cases in which an injury was reported, the injury most often reported was a minor injury. There is no SCIBRS injury category for death, the number of deaths was based on murders and negligent homicides.

**Table 13**  
**Injuries Resulting From Criminal Firearm Violence**

<b><u>Injury</u></b>	<b><u>Number</u></b>	<b><u>Pct.</u></b>
Minor injury	4,424	41.5
Other major injury	3,207	30.1
Severe laceration	1,485	13.9
Death	873	8.2
Internal injury	529	5.0
Broken bones	110	1.0
Unconsciousness	22	0.2
Loss of teeth	13	0.1

Note: The 32,080 cases in which no injury was reported are excluded.  
Source: SCIBRS, SLED.

## **Criminal Homicide**

There were 873 criminal firearm homicides from 1996 through 1999, for an overall rate of 0.57 per 10,000. The rate of firearm homicide has dropped from 0.64 to 0.53 during that time, a decrease of 17%.

**Table 14**  
**Victims of Firearm Homicide**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Victims</b>	<b>Rate</b>	<b>Pct. Change</b>
1996	239	0.64	
1997	225	0.59	-7.13
1998	205	0.53	-10.06
1999	204	0.53	-1.67

Note: Rate per 10,000 population.

Source: SCIBRS, SLED; Population estimates, B&CB ORS.

Handgun was the type of firearm most frequently used in victimization, accounting for 82.8% of cases. Shotgun was the second most frequently reported firearm, accounting for 10.8% of cases.

**Table 15**  
**Firearm Use in Criminal Homicide**

<b>Weapon</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Pct.</b>
Handgun	667	82.8
Shotgun	87	10.8
Rifle	49	6.1
Other	3	0.4

Note: There were 67 cases in which the type of firearm was unknown.

Source: SCIBRS, SLED.

The greatest number of firearm homicide victims was found among 25 to 34 year olds, accounting for 28.9% of the total. However, the highest firearm victimization rate was found among 18 to 21 year olds, followed by 22 to 24 year olds.

**Table 16**  
**Firearm Homicide Victims by Age Group**

<b>Age Group</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Pct.</b>	<b>Rate</b>
0 - 5	3	0.3	0.02
6- 12	6	0.7	0.04
13 - 17	58	6.7	0.53
18 - 21	136	15.6	1.54
22 - 24	93	10.7	1.43
25 - 34	251	28.9	1.11
35 - 44	149	17.1	0.61
45 - 54	99	11.4	0.50
55 - 64	44	5.1	0.33
65 & older	31	3.6	0.17

Note: Rate per 10,000 victims within the corresponding age group.

Source: SCIBRS, SLED; Population estimates, B&CB ORS.

Blacks accounted for 61.2% of all firearm homicide victims. Whites accounted for 38.6%, while Asians and Native Americans accounted for less than 1%.

**Table 17**  
**Firearm Homicide Victims by Race**

<b>Race</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Pct.</b>
Asian	1	0.1
Black	533	61.2
Native American	1	0.1
White	337	38.6

Note: There was one case in which race was unknown.

Source: SCIBRS, SLED.



Non-Whites had firearm homicide victimization rates higher than Whites each year from 1996 through 1999. The overall firearm homicide rate for Non-Whites was 1.13 compared to 0.32 for Whites.

**Table 18**  
**Firearm Homicide Victimization Rates by Racial Group**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Non-White</b>	<b>White</b>
1996	1.29	0.35
1997	1.09	0.37
1998	1.07	0.29
1999	1.07	0.28
Total	1.13	0.32

Note: Rate per 10,000 within the corresponding racial group.  
Source: SCIBRS, SLED; Population estimates, B&CB ORS.

Males accounted for 76.6% of firearm homicide victims from 1996 through 1999. Females made up 23.4% of firearm homicide victims.

**Table 19**  
**Firearm Homicide Victims by Sex**

<b>Sex</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Pct.</b>
Female	204	23.4
Male	669	76.6

Source: SCIBRS, SLED.

Males had higher firearm homicide victimization rates than females each year from 1996 through 1999. The overall firearm homicide rate for males during the time period was 0.91 per 10,000 compared to 0.26 per 10,000 for females.

**Table 20**  
**Firearm Homicide Rates by Sex**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>
1996	0.28	1.03
1997	0.25	0.96
1998	0.27	0.82
1999	0.23	0.84
Total	0.26	0.91

Note: Rate per 10,000 within the corresponding sex.

Source: SCIBRS, SLED; Population estimates, B&CB ORS.

Non-White males had the highest firearm homicide victimization rate each year. Overall, Non-White males had the highest firearm homicide victimization rate, followed by White males, Non-White females and White females.

**Table 21**  
**Firearm Homicide Victimization Rates by Race/Sex**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Non-White Female</b>	<b>Non-White Male</b>	<b>White Female</b>	<b>White Male</b>
1996	0.51	2.17	0.17	0.53
1997	0.43	1.84	0.17	0.58
1998	0.38	1.89	0.21	0.36
1999	0.36	1.89	0.18	0.39
Total	0.42	1.95	0.18	0.46

Note: Rate per 10,000 within the corresponding race/sex.

Source: SCIBRS, SLED; Population estimates, B&CB ORS.

The leading victim to offender relationship group among firearm homicide victims was victim knew the offender. Stranger was the second most frequent victim to offender relationship group, accounting for 21.2% of firearm homicides.

**Table 22**  
**Relationship of Firearm Homicide Victims to Offenders**

<b>Victim to Offender</b>		
<b>Relationship Group</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Pct.</b>
Known to victim	391	49.9
Stranger	166	21.2
Family	163	20.8
Romantic	57	7.3
Ex-spouse	7	0.9

Note: There were 89 cases missing victim to offender relationship data.  
Source: SCIBRS, SLED

The most often reported location code at which criminal homicide occurred was at a residence or home. This location category accounted for 45.2% of criminal firearm homicide victims. That was followed by the location category of highway/road/alley, which accounted for 19% of victims.

**Table 23**  
**Location of Firearm Homicide**

<b>Location</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Pct.</b>
Residence/home	395	45.2
Highway/road/alley	166	19.0
Bar/night club	69	7.9
Apartment/condo	54	6.2
Field/woods	35	4.0
Commercial/office bldg.	29	3.3
Parking lot/garage	21	2.4
Convenience store	20	2.3
Other/unknown	17	1.9
Restaurant	16	1.8
Hotel/motel	13	1.5
Gas station	9	1.0
All other locations	29	3.3

Note: All other locations consists of 12 location codes, each of which individually accounted for less than 1% of all cases.  
Source: SCIBRS, SLED.

### **Forcible Sex Offenses**

There were 272 victims of forcible sex offenses involving firearms from 1996 through 1999, for an overall rate of 0.18 per 10,000. The rate has decreased each year, with an overall decrease of 36.4% from 1996 to 1997. It is important to note that these rates are based on relatively small numbers, consequently small changes in year to year totals can result in seemingly large rate changes.

**Table 24**  
**Victims of Firearm Forcible Sex Offenses**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Victims</b>	<b>Rate</b>	<b>Pct. Change</b>
1996	82	0.22	
1997	73	0.19	-13.6
1998	63	0.16	-15.8
1999	54	0.14	-14.3

Note: Rate per 10,000 population.

Source: SCIBRS, SLED; Population estimates, B&CB ORS.

Handguns were the type of firearm most frequently used in forcible sex offense victimization, accounting for 89.6% of all cases. Shotguns were the second most frequently reported firearm, and were involved in 6.4% of all cases.

**Table 25**  
**Type of Firearm Use in Forcible Sex Offenses**

<b>Weapon</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Pct.</b>
Handgun	223	89.6
Shotgun	16	6.4
Other firearm	6	2.4
Rifle	4	1.6

Note: There were 23 cases in which the type of firearm was unknown.

Source: SCIBRS, SLED.

The greatest number of firearm forcible sex offenses was found among 25 to 34 year olds, accounting for 32% of the total. However, the highest victimization rate was found among 18 to 21 year olds, followed by 22 to 24 year olds.

**Table 26**  
**Firearm Forcible Sex Offenses by Age Group**

<b>Age Group</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Pct.</b>	<b>Rate</b>
0 - 5	3	1.1	0.01
6 - 12	5	1.8	0.01
13 - 17	44	16.2	0.15
18 - 21	47	17.3	0.20
22 - 24	21	7.7	0.12
25 - 34	87	32.0	0.14
35 - 44	47	17.3	0.07
45 - 54	15	5.5	0.03
55 - 64	2	0.7	0.01
65 & older	1	0.4	<0.01

Note: Rate per 10,000 victims within the corresponding age group.

Source: SCIBRS, SLED; Population estimates, B&CB ORS.

Whites accounted for 55.5% of all firearm related forcible sex offense victims. Blacks accounted for 43.8% of the victims, while Asians and Native Americans accounted for less than 1%.

**Table 27**  
**Firearm Related Forcible Sex Offense Victims by Race**

<b>Race</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Pct.</b>
Asian	1	0.4
Black	119	43.8
Native American	1	0.4
White	151	55.5

Source: SCIBRS, SLED.

Non-Whites had an overall firearm related forcible sex offense victimization rates, approximately 1.9 times higher than the victimization rate for Whites.

**Table 28**  
**Firearm Forcible Sex Offense Victimization Rates by Racial Group**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Non-White</b>	<b>White</b>
1996	0.28	0.19
1997	0.26	0.16
1998	0.23	0.14
1999	0.25	0.09
Total	0.26	0.14

Note: Rate per 10,000 within the corresponding racial group.  
Source: SCIBRS, SLED; Population estimates, B&CB ORS.

Female outnumbered males as victims of firearm forcible sex offenses. Of the total firearm related forcible sex offense victims, 96.7% were female.

**Table 29**  
**Firearm Forcible Sex Offense Victims by Sex**

<b>Sex</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Pct.</b>
Female	263	96.7
Male	9	3.3

Source: SCIBRS, SLED.

Females had higher rates of firearm related forcible sex offense victimization. The overall firearm homicide rate for females during the time period was 0.33 per 10,000 compared to 0.01 per 10,000 for males.

**Table 30**  
**Firearm Forcible Sex Offense Victimization Rates by Sex**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>
1996	0.41	0.02
1997	0.37	0.01
1998	0.31	0.01
1999	0.25	0.02
Total	0.33	0.01

Note: Rate per 10,000 within the corresponding sex.

Source: SCIBRS, SLED; Population estimates, B&CB ORS.

The highest firearm related forcible sex offense victimization rate was among Non-White females, followed by White females, White males and Non-White males.

**Table 31**  
**Firearm Forcible Sex Offense**  
**Victimization Rates by Race/Sex**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Non-White Female</b>	<b>Non-White Male</b>	<b>White Female</b>	<b>White Male</b>
1996	0.53	0.00	0.35	0.02
1997	0.49	0.00	0.31	0.01
1998	0.39	0.04	0.27	0.00
1999	0.47	0.00	0.15	0.02
Total	0.47	0.01	0.27	0.01

Note: Rate per 10,000 within the corresponding race/sex.

Source: SCIBRS, SLED; Population estimates, B&CB ORS.

Stranger was the most frequent victim to offender relationship among firearm forcible sex offense victims, accounting for 52.4% of cases. Known to victim was the second most frequently reported relationship group, accounting for 31.7% of cases.

**Table 32**  
**Relationship of Firearm Forcible Sex Offense Victims to Offenders**

<b>Victim to Offender</b>		
<b>Relationship Group</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Pct.</b>
Stranger	132	52.4
Known to victim	80	31.7
Family	27	10.7
Romantic	12	4.8
Ex-spouse	1	0.4

Note: There were 20 cases in which the victim to offender relationship was unknown.  
Source: SCIBRS, SLED.

The most often reported location of firearm related forcible sex offenses was the residence or home, followed by highway/road/alley.

**Table 33**  
**Location of Firearm Related Forcible Sex Offenses**

<b>Location</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Pct.</b>
Residence/home	117	43.0
Highway/road/alley	57	21.0
Field/woods	23	8.5
Apartment/condo	17	6.3
Hotel/motel	15	5.5
Other/unknown	11	4.0
Commercial/office bldg.	7	2.6
School K-12	6	2.2
Convenience store	5	1.8
Parking lot/garage	4	1.5
Grocery	3	1.1
All other locations	7	2.6

Note: All other locations consists of 5 location codes, each of which individually accounted for less than 1% of all cases.  
Source: SCIBRS, SLED.



## **Robbery**

There were 14,090 victims of robbery involving firearms from 1996 through 1999. Overall, the firearm robbery victimization rate increased 2.5% from 1996 to 1999.

**Table 34**  
**Victims of Firearm Robbery**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Victims</b>	<b>Rate</b>	<b>Pct. Change</b>
1996	3,382	9.05	
1997	3,655	9.64	+6.6
1998	3,446	8.97	-6.9
1999	3,607	9.28	+3.4

Note: Rate per 10,000 population.

Source: SCIBRS, SLED; Population estimates, B&CB ORS.

Handguns were the type of firearm most frequently used in robbery victimization, accounting for 92.3% of cases. Shotguns were the second most frequently reported firearm, and were involved in 5.3% of the cases.

**Table 34**  
**Firearm Use in Robbery**

<b>Weapon</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Pct.</b>
Handgun	12,070	92.3
Shotgun	690	5.3
Rifle	252	1.9
Other firearm	72	0.6

Note: There were 1,006 cases in which the type of firearm was unknown.

Source: SCIBRS, SLED.

The greatest number of firearm robbery victims was found among 25 to 34 year olds, accounting for 25.1% of the total. However, the highest rate was found among 18 to 21 year olds, followed by 22 to 24 year olds.

**Table 35**  
**Firearm Robbery by Age Group**

<b>Age Group</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Pct.</b>	<b>Rate</b>
0 - 5	196	1.4	1.59
6 - 12	61	0.4	0.41
13 - 17	987	7.0	9.01
18 - 21	2,657	18.9	30.16
22 - 24	1,494	10.6	23.03
25 - 34	3,531	25.1	15.55
35 - 44	2,478	17.6	10.08
45 - 54	1,494	10.6	7.51
55 - 64	759	5.4	5.74
65 & older	431	3.1	2.32

Note: Rate per 10,000 victims within the corresponding age group.

Source: SCIBRS, SLED; Population estimates, B&CB ORS.

Whites accounted for 54% of all firearm robbery victims. Blacks accounted for 44.6% of the victims, Asians accounted for 1% of victims and Native Americans accounted for less than 1% of firearm robbery victims.

**Table 36**  
**Firearm Robbery Victims by Race**

<b>Race</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Pct.</b>
Asian	146	1.0
Black	6,238	44.6
Native American	55	0.4
White	7,555	54.0

Note: There were 96 victims classified as race unknown.

Source: SCIBRS, SLED.

Non-Whites had an overall firearm robbery victimization rate 1.9 times higher than Whites.

**Table 37**  
**Firearm Robbery Victimization Rates by Racial Group**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Non-White</b>	<b>White</b>
1996	13.66	6.87
1997	14.07	7.56
1998	12.48	7.30
1999	14.15	7.01
Total	13.59	7.18

Note: Rate per 10,000 within the corresponding racial group.

Source: SCIBRS, SLED; Population estimates, B&CB ORS.

Firearm robbery victims were more often male than female. Males made up 65.1% of firearm robbery victims, compared to 34.9% for females.

**Table 38**  
**Firearm Robbery Victims by Sex**

<b>Sex</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Pct.</b>
Female	4,902	34.9
Male	9,148	65.1

Source: SCIBRS, SLED.

The highest firearm related forcible sex offense victimization rate was among Non-White females, followed by White females, White males and Non-White males.

**Table 39**  
**Firearm Robbery Victimization Rates**  
**by Race/Sex**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Non-White Female</b>	<b>Non-White Male</b>	<b>White Female</b>	<b>White Male</b>
1996	6.91	21.40	5.18	8.62
1997	7.24	21.91	5.92	9.27
1998	7.33	18.56	5.79	8.88
1999	8.22	20.93	5.51	8.56
Total	7.43	20.70	5.60	8.83

Note: Rate per 10,000 within the corresponding race/sex.

Source: SCIBRS, SLED; Population estimates, B&CB ORS.

Strangers accounted for 85% of the firearm robberies. The known to the victim category accounted for 14.4% of firearm robbery cases. The family, romantic relationships and ex-spouse categories combined accounted for less than 1% of the total.

**Table 40**  
**Relationship of Firearm Robbery Victims to Offenders**

<b>Victim to Offender Relationship Group</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Pct.</b>
Stranger	10,090	85.0
Known to the victim	1,714	14.4
Family	41	0.3
Romantic	28	0.2
Ex-spouse	1	0.0

Note: There were 2,216 cases missing victim to offender relationship data.

Source: SCIBRS, SLED

The most often reported location of firearm related robbery was highway/road/alley, which accounted for 21.8% of cases. Residence/home was the second most often reported location (15.1%), followed by convenience store (13%).

**Table 41**  
**Location of Firearm Robberies**

<b>Location</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Pct.</b>
Highway/road/alley	3,066	21.8
Residence/home	2,121	15.1
Convenience store	1,831	13.0
Commercial/office bldg.	1,284	9.1
Restaurant	1,116	7.9
Hotel/motel	688	4.9
Apartment/condo	645	4.6
Parking lot/garage	596	4.2
Bank/S&L	462	3.3
Grocery	363	2.6
Bar/night club	354	2.5
Specialty store	344	2.4
Other/unknown	334	2.4
Gas station	300	2.1
All other locations	586	4.2

Note: All other locations consists of 14 location codes, each of which individually accounted for less than 1% of all cases.

Source: SCIBRS, SLED.

### **Aggravated Assault**

There were 26,453 victims of aggravated assaults involving firearms from 1996 through 1999. This represents an overall rate of 17.34 per 10,000 unit of population. Each year the firearm aggravated assault rate has decreased.

**Table 42**  
**Victims of Firearm Aggravated Assault**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Victims</b>	<b>Rate</b>	<b>Pct. Change</b>
1996	7,089	18.96	
1997	6,993	18.45	-2.7
1998	6,441	16.78	-9.1
1999	5,930	15.26	-9.0

Note: Rate per 10,000 population.

Source: SCIBRS, SLED; Population estimates, B&CB ORS.

Handgun was the type of firearm most frequently used in robbery victimization, accounting for 78.5% of cases. Shotgun was the second most frequently reported type of firearm. Shotguns were involved in 12.6% of firearm robbery cases.

**Table 43**  
**Firearm Use in Aggravated Assault**

<b>Weapon</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Pct.</b>
Handgun	18,601	78.5
Shotgun	2,974	12.6
Rifle	1,745	7.4
Other firearm	375	1.6

Note: There were 2,758 cases in which the type of firearm was unknown.

Source: SCIBRS, SLED

The greatest number of firearm aggravated assault victims was found among 25 to 34 year olds, accounting for 27.9% of the total. However, the highest rate of firearm aggravated assault victimization was found among 18 to 21 year olds, followed by 22 to 24 year olds.

**Table 44**  
**Firearm Aggravated Assault Victims**  
**by Age Group**

<b>Age Group</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Pct.</b>	<b>Rate</b>
0 - 5	415	1.6	3.36
6 - 12	607	2.3	4.05
13 - 17	2,723	10.3	24.86
18 - 21	4,748	18.0	53.89
22 - 24	2,851	10.8	43.96
25 - 34	7,367	27.9	32.45
35 - 44	4,818	18.2	19.60
45 - 54	1,959	7.4	9.84
55 - 64	633	2.4	4.79
65 & older	317	1.2	1.71

Note: Rate per 10,000 victims within the corresponding age group.

Source: SCIBRS, SLED; Population estimates, B&CB ORS.

Blacks accounted for 61.4% of all firearm aggravated assault victims. Whites accounted for 38.3% of the victims, Asians and Native Americans accounted for less than 1%.

**Table 45**  
**Firearm Aggravated Assault Victims by Race**

<b>Race</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Pct.</b>
Asian	55	0.2
Black	16,186	61.4
Native American	43	0.2
White	10,088	38.3

Note: There were 81 victims classified as race unknown.

Source: SCIBRS, SLED.

Non-Whites had an overall firearm aggravated assault victimization rate of 34.37 per 10,000, compared to a victimization rate of 9.59 per 10,000 for Whites. The aggravated assault victimization rate for Non-Whites exceeded the victimization rate for Whites each year from 1996 through 1999.

**Table 46**  
**Aggravated Assault Victimization Rates by Racial Group**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Non-White</b>	<b>White</b>
1996	37.78	10.37
1997	36.56	10.20
1998	33.03	9.39
1999	30.24	8.46
Total	34.37	9.59

Note: Rate per 10,000 within the corresponding racial group.

Source: SCIBRS, SLED; Population estimates, B&CB ORS.

Firearm aggravated assault victims were more often male than female. Males made up 64.3% of firearm aggravated assault victims, compared to 35.7% for females.

**Table 47**  
**Firearm Aggravated Assault Victims by Sex**

<b>Sex</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Pct.</b>
Female	9,439	35.7
Male	16,983	64.3

Note: There were 31 cases in which sex was listed as unknown.

Source: SCIBRS, SLED.



Males had higher rates of firearm related aggravated assault victimization than females. The overall firearm aggravated assault victimization rate for males during the 1996 through 1999 time period was 23.09 per 10,000 compared to 11.95 per 10,000 for females.

**Table 48**  
**Firearm Aggravated Assault Victimization Rates by Sex**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>
1996	12.79	25.54
1997	12.72	24.57
1998	11.58	22.33
1999	10.75	20.05
Total	11.95	23.09

Note: Rate per 10,000 within the corresponding sex.

Source: SCIBRS, SLED; Population estimates, B&CB ORS.

Non-White Males had the highest firearm aggravated assault victimization rate, followed by Non-White females, White males and White females. The victimization rate for Non-White males was more than twice the rate for Non-White females.

**Table 49**  
**Firearm Aggravated Assault**  
**Victimization Rates by Race/Sex**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Non-White Female</b>	<b>Non-White Male</b>	<b>White Female</b>	<b>White Male</b>
1996	25.14	52.27	6.90	13.98
1997	23.75	51.23	7.48	13.03
1998	22.12	46.03	6.61	12.29
1999	20.49	41.39	6.15	10.87
Total	22.86	47.68	6.78	12.53

Note: Rate per 10,000 within the corresponding race/sex.

Source: SCIBRS, SLED; Population estimates, B&CB ORS.

The known to the victim category accounted for 50.2% of the firearm aggravated assaults. The category strangers ranked second (22.7%), followed by family members (20.3%).

**Table 50**  
**Relationship of Firearm Aggravated Assault Victims to Offenders**

<b>Victim to Offender</b>		
<b>Relationship Group</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Pct.</b>
Known to the victim	11,915	50.2
Stranger	5,377	22.7
Family	4,818	20.3
Romantic	1,457	6.1
Ex-spouse	157	0.7

Note: There were 2,729 cases missing victim to offender relationship data.  
Source: SCIBRS, SLED

Residence/home was the location most often reported for firearm related aggravated assault victims. The second most commonly reported location was highway/road/alley.

**Table 51**  
**Location of Firearm Aggravated Assaults**

<b>Location</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Pct.</b>
Residence/home	13,538	51.2
Highway/road/alley	6,429	24.3
Apartment/condo	1,520	5.7
Bar/night club	1,122	4.2
Commercial/office bldg.	793	3.0
Parking lot/garage	757	2.9
Other/unknown	461	1.7
Convenience store	442	1.7
All other locations	1,391	5.3

Note: All other locations consists of 20 location codes, each of which individually accounted for less than 1% of all cases.  
Source: SCIBRS, SLED.

## **Kidnapping**

There were 1,055 victims kidnapped with firearms from 1996 through 1999. The firearm kidnapping victimization rate dropped from 0.68 to 0.57 during that time, a decrease of 20.5%.

**Table 52**  
**Victims of Firearm Kidnapping**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Victims</b>	<b>Rate</b>	<b>Pct. Change</b>
1996	253	0.68	
1997	304	0.80	+18.5
1998	276	0.72	-10.4
1999	222	0.57	-20.5

Note: Rate per 10,000 population.

Source: SCIBRS, SLED; Population estimates, B&CB ORS.

Handgun was the type of firearm most frequently used in kidnappings, accounting for 90.5% of cases. Shotgun ranked as the second most frequently reported firearm, and was involved in 4.8% of kidnappings.

**Table 53**  
**Firearm Use in Kidnapping**

<b>Weapon</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Pct.</b>
Handgun	878	90.5
Shotgun	47	4.8
Rifle	39	4.0
Other firearm	6	0.6

Note: There were 85 cases in which the type of firearm was unknown.

Source: SCIBRS, SLED.

The 25 through 34 age group accounted for more firearm kidnapping victims than any other age group. However, the 22 through 24 age group had the highest rate of firearm kidnapping followed by the 18 through 21 age group.

**Table 54**  
**Firearm Kidnapping Victims**  
**by Age Group**

<b>Age Group</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Pct.</b>	<b>Rate</b>
0 - 5	22	2.1	0.18
6 - 12	20	1.9	0.13
13 - 17	101	9.6	0.92
18 - 21	177	16.8	2.01
22 - 24	139	13.2	2.14
25 - 34	305	29.0	1.34
35 - 44	160	15.2	0.65
45 - 54	77	7.3	0.39
55 - 64	31	2.9	0.23
65 & older	21	2.0	0.11

Note: Rate per 10,000 victims within the corresponding age group.

Source: SCIBRS, SLED; Population estimates, B&CB ORS.

Blacks accounted for 50.3% of all firearm kidnapping victims. Whites accounted for 47.9% of the victims, Asians accounted for 1.3% and Native Americans accounted for less than 1%.

**Table 55**  
**Firearm Kidnapping Victims by Race**

<b>Race</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Pct.</b>
Asian	14	1.3
Black	531	50.3
Native American	5	0.5
White	505	47.9

Note: There were 81 victims reported as race unknown.

Source: SCIBRS, SLED.

Non-Whites had an overall firearm related kidnapping victimization rate of 1.16 per 10,000, compared to a victimization rate of 0.48 per 10,000 for Whites. The firearm related kidnapping victimization rate for Non-Whites exceeded the victimization rate for Whites each year.

**Table 56**  
**Firearm Kidnapping Victimization Rates by Racial Group**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Non-White</b>	<b>White</b>
1996	1.13	0.47
1997	1.31	0.57
1998	1.20	0.50
1999	1.00	0.38
Total	1.16	0.48

Note: Rate per 10,000 within the corresponding racial group.

Source: SCIBRS, SLED; Population estimates, B&CB ORS.

Males made up 50.6% of firearm related kidnapping victims, females accounted for 49.4%.

**Table 57**  
**Firearm Kidnapping Victims by Sex**

<b>Sex</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Pct.</b>
Female	521	49.4
Male	534	50.6

Source: SCIBRS, SLED.

Males had a higher overall rate of firearm related kidnapping victimization. The overall firearm related kidnapping victimization rate for males during the 1996 through 1999 time period was 0.73 per 10,000 compared to 0.66 per 10,000 for females.

**Table 58**  
**Firearm Kidnapping Victimization Rates by Sex**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>
1996	0.66	0.70
1997	0.81	0.79
1998	0.63	0.81
1999	0.54	0.61
Total	0.66	0.73

Note: Rate per 10,000 within the corresponding sex.

Source: SCIBRS, SLED; Population estimates, B&CB ORS.

Non-White Males had the highest firearm related kidnapping victimization rate, followed by Non-White females, White males and White females.

**Table 59**  
**Firearm Kidnapping**  
**Victimization Rates by Race/Sex**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Non-White Female</b>	<b>Non-White Male</b>	<b>White Female</b>	<b>White Male</b>
1996	1.11	1.16	0.44	0.50
1997	1.30	1.33	0.58	0.56
1998	1.04	1.40	0.44	0.56
1999	0.90	1.11	0.37	0.40
Total	1.09	1.25	0.46	0.50

Note: Rate per 10,000 within the corresponding race/sex.

Source: SCIBRS, SLED; Population estimates, B&CB ORS.

The stranger category accounted for 62.7% of firearm related kidnappings. The known to the victim category ranked second (21.4%), followed by romantic relationships (8.2%).

**Table 60**  
**Relationship of Firearm Kidnapping Victims to Offenders**

<b>Victim to Offender</b>		
<b>Relationship Group</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Pct.</b>
Stranger	586	62.7
Known to victim	200	21.4
Romantic	77	8.2
Family	64	6.9
Ex-spouse	7	0.7

Note: There were 2,729 cases in which the victim to offender relationship was unknown.  
Source: SCIBRS, SLED.

Residence/home was the location most often reported for firearm related kidnapping victims. The second most often reported location was highway/road/alley.

**Table 61**  
**Location of Firearm Kidnappings**

<b>Location</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Pct.</b>
Residence/home	332	31.5
Highway/road/alley	268	25.4
Apartment/condo	81	7.7
Commercial/office bldg.	56	5.3
Convenience store	53	5.0
Restaurant	50	4.7
Parking lot/garage	35	3.3
Hotel/motel	34	3.2
Grocery	33	3.1
Bar/night club	18	1.7
Other/unknown	18	1.7
Gas station	14	1.3
Field/woods	12	1.1
Bank/S&L	11	1.0
Shopping mall	11	1.0
All other locations	29	2.7

Note: All other locations consists of 10 location codes, all of which individually accounted for less than 1% of all cases.  
Source: SCIBRS, SLED.

## **Suicide**

Suicide is not typically included among criminal offenses. However, since data concerning suicides are included among the SCIBRS data, this provides an opportunity to better understand another facet of firearm violence. There were 407 reported cases of suicide by firearms in South Carolina from 1996 through 1999. That represents an overall firearm suicide rate of 0.27 per 10,000.

**Table 62**  
**Victims of Firearm Suicide**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Victims</b>	<b>Rate</b>	<b>Change</b>
1996	91	0.24	
1997	102	0.27	+10.6
1998	103	0.27	-0.3
1999	111	0.29	+6.5

Note: Rate per 10,000 population.

Source: SCIBRS, SLED; Population estimates, B&CB ORS.

Handgun was the firearm type most frequently used in suicides, accounting for 71.3% of suicide cases. Rifle was the second most frequently reported firearm type, and was involved in 14% of suicides involving firearms.

**Table 63**  
**Firearm Use in Suicide**

<b>Weapon</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Pct.</b>
Handgun	249	71.3
Rifle	49	14.0
Shotgun	46	13.2
Other firearm	5	1.4

Note: There were 58 cases in which the type of firearm was unknown.

Source: SCIBRS, SLED



**Table 64**  
**Firearm Suicide Victims**  
**by Age Group**

<u>Age Group</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Pct.</u>	<u>Rate</u>
0 - 5	5	1.2	0.04
6 - 12	1	0.2	0.01
13 - 17	20	4.9	0.18
18 - 21	22	5.4	0.25
22 - 24	26	6.4	0.40
25 - 34	73	17.9	0.32
35 - 44	92	22.6	0.37
45 - 54	79	19.4	0.40
55 - 64	39	9.6	0.30
65 & older	50	12.3	0.27

Note: Rate per 10,000 victims within the corresponding age group.

Source: SCIBRS, SLED; Population estimates, B&CB ORS.

Whites accounted for 85.2% of all firearm suicide victims. Blacks accounted for 14.8% of firearm suicide victims. No Asians or Native Americans were reported among firearm suicide victims.

**Table 65**  
**Firearm Suicide Victims by Race**

<u>Race</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Pct.</u>
Black	60	14.8
White	346	85.2

Note: There was 1 victim reported as race unknown.

Source: SCIBRS, SLED

White males had an overall firearm suicide victimization rate of 0.51 per 10,000, followed by Non-White males with 0.18, White females with 0.15 and Non-White females with 0.08.

**Table 66**  
**Firearm Suicide Victimization Rates by Race/Sex**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Non-White Female</b>	<b>Non-White Male</b>	<b>White Female</b>	<b>White Male</b>
1996	0.10	0.26	0.12	0.44
1997	0.08	0.15	0.17	0.52
1998	0.09	0.18	0.15	0.52
1999	0.05	0.14	0.16	0.59
Total	0.08	0.18	0.15	0.51

Note: Rate per 10,000 within the corresponding race/sex group.  
Source: SCIBRS, SLED; Population estimates, B&CB ORS.

Residence/home was the most frequent location for firearm suicides accounting for 80.3% of cases. Apartment/condominium ranked second with 6.4%.

**Table 67**  
**Location of Firearm Suicides**

<b>Location</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Pct.</b>
Residence/home	327	80.3
Apartment/condo	26	6.4
Other/unknown	12	2.9
Parking lot/garage	11	2.7
Highway/road/alley	8	2.0
Hotel/motel	7	1.7
Field/woods	5	1.2
All other locations	11	2.7

Note: All other locations consists of 9 location codes, each of which individually accounted for less than 1% of all cases.  
Source: SCIBRS, SLED

### **Justifiable Homicide**

Justifiable homicide, by its very definition, is not a criminal offense. However, since the SCIBRS data provide an opportunity to better understand another facet of firearm violence, albeit non-criminal behavior, these data were included for analysis. There were 56 reported cases of justifiable homicide by firearms in South Carolina from 1996 through 1999. It is important to note that with such a small number of cases, the percent change in rates from year to year may not be very meaningful.

**Table 68**  
**Deaths in Firearm Justifiable Homicide**

<b><u>Year</u></b>	<b><u>Deaths</u></b>	<b><u>Rate</u></b>
1996	11	0.03
1997	17	0.04
1998	14	0.04
1999	14	0.04

Note: Rate per 10,000 population.

Source: SCIBRS, SLED; Population estimates, B&CB ORS.

Handguns were the firearms most frequently used in justifiable homicide, accounting for 87% of justifiable homicide cases. Shotguns were the second most frequently reported firearm, and were involved in 7.4% of justifiable homicides.

**Table 69**  
**Firearm Use in Justifiable Homicide**

<b><u>Weapon</u></b>	<b><u>Number</u></b>	<b><u>Pct.</u></b>
Handgun	47	87.0
Shotgun	4	7.4
Rifle	3	5.6

Note: There were 2 cases in which the type of firearm was unknown.

Source: SCIBRS, SLED.

The highest rate of firearm justifiable homicide was among those 18 to 21 year of age, followed by those 22 through 24 years of age. There were no cases in which the person killed was less than 18 years of age.

**Table 70**  
**Firearm Justifiable Homicide Deaths**  
**by Age Group**

<b>Age Group</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Pct.</b>	<b>Rate</b>
18 - 21	10	17.9	0.11
22 - 24	5	8.9	0.08
25 - 34	17	30.4	0.07
35 - 44	14	25.0	0.06
45 - 54	5	8.9	0.03
55 - 64	4	7.1	0.03
65 & older	1	1.8	0.01

Note: Rate per 10,000 victims within the corresponding age group.  
Source: SCIBRS, SLED; Population estimates, B&CB ORS.

Blacks accounted for 58.9% of people killed in firearm justifiable homicide. Whites accounted for 41.1% of firearm justifiable homicide deaths. There were no Asian or Native Americans deaths resulting from firearm justifiable homicide. The firearm justifiable homicide rate for Non-Whites from 1996 through 1997 was 0.07 per 10,000 compared to 0.02 for Whites.

**Table 71**  
**Firearm Justifiable Homicide Deaths by Race**

<b>Race</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Pct.</b>	<b>Rate</b>
Non-White	33	58.9	0.07
White	23	41.1	0.02

Note: Rate per 10,000 victims within the corresponding age group.  
Source: SCIBRS, SLED; Population estimates, B&CB ORS.

All reported deaths resulting from firearm justifiable homicide occurred among males. The firearm justifiable homicide rate for Non-White males from 1996 through 1999 was 0.15, compared to 0.11 for White males.

**Table 72**  
**Firearm Justifiable Homicide**  
**Death Rates by Race/Sex**

<b>Race/Sex</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Pct.</b>	<b>Rate</b>
Non-White Male	33	58.9	0.15
White Male	23	41.1	0.11

Note: Rate per 10,000 within the corresponding race/sex.

Source: SCIBRS, SLED; Population estimates, B&CB ORS.

Firearm justifiable homicides occurred most often among strangers (57.4%), followed by relationships in which the perpetrator and the defender knew one another (27.8%).

**Table 73**  
**Type of Relationship in Firearm Justifiable Homicide**

<b>Type of Relationship</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Pct.</b>
Stranger	31	57.4
Known to each other	15	27.8
Family	4	7.4
Romantic	4	7.4

Note: There were 2 cases in which the relationship was unknown.

Source: SCIBRS, SLED.

Residence/home was the location most often reported for firearm related justifiable homicides, accounting for 55.4% of all cases. The second most often reported location was highway/road/alley, accounting for 16.1% of cases.

**Table 74**  
**Location of Firearm Justifiable Homicides**

<b><u>Location</u></b>	<b><u>Number</u></b>	<b><u>Pct.</u></b>
Residence/home	31	55.4
Highway/road/alley	9	16.1
Apartment/condo	5	8.9
Convenience store	3	5.4
Other/unknown	3	5.4
Commercial/office bldg.	2	3.6
Grocery	2	3.6
Gas station	1	1.8

Source: SCIBRS, SLED.

## **Arrests**

There were 15,290 arrests made during the 1996 through 1999 time period of individuals for criminal violent offenses in which a firearm was involved. The arrest rate for criminal firearm violence over that time period was 10.02 per 10,000. It is important to note that arrests and offenses do not necessarily correspond to one another on a one-to-one basis. There might be multiple arrests for one offense and no arrests for another. Additionally, an offense committed in one time frame might correspond to an arrest made in another.

**Table 75**  
**Arrests for Firearm Violence**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Arrests</b>	<b>Rate</b>
1996	4,064	10.87
1997	4,213	11.12
1998	3,672	9.56
1999	3,341	8.60

Note: Rate per 10,000 population.

Source: SCIBRS, SLED; Population estimates, B&CB ORS.

Of those arrested for firearm violence, 1,555 (10.2%) were armed with firearms at the time of arrest. Among those who were apprehended with firearms in their possession, handgun was the type of firearm most often reported.

**Table 76**  
**Firearms at Time of Arrest**

<b>Weapon</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Pct.</b>
Handgun	1,147	79.2
Shotgun	174	12.0
Rifle	94	6.5
Other firearm	34	2.3

Note: There were 106 arrests in which the type of firearm was unknown.

Source: SCIBRS, SLED.

The mean age for individuals arrested for firearm violence was 28.6 years of age, the median age was 24. The 18 to 21 years old age group had the highest arrest rate for firearm violence, followed by the 22 to 24 years old age group.

**Table 77**  
**Firearm Arrests by Age Group**

<b>Age Group</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Pct.</b>	<b>Rate</b>
6 - 12	76	0.5	0.51
13 - 17	2,029	12.9	18.53
18 - 21	3,926	25.0	44.56
22 - 24	1,909	12.2	29.43
25 - 34	3,684	23.5	16.23
35 - 44	2,211	14.1	9.00
45 - 54	1,129	7.2	5.67
55 - 64	468	3.0	3.54
65 & older	246	1.6	1.33

Note: Rate per 10,000 victims within the corresponding age group.  
Source: SCIBRS, SLED; Population estimates, B&CB ORS.

The age of criminal responsibility in South Carolina, in most circumstances, is 17 years of age. Offenders are generally treated as juveniles if they are 16 years old or younger, and as adults if they are 17 years of age or older. Juveniles made up less than 10% of those arrested for firearm violence. The arrest rate for juveniles was 3.2 per 10,000 population, compared to 12.47 among adults.

**Table 78**  
**Firearm Arrests by Age Group**

<b>Age Group</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Pct.</b>	<b>Rate</b>
Juvenile	1,154	7.4	3.20
Adult	14,524	92.6	12.47

Note: Rate per 10,000 population within the corresponding age group.  
Source: SCIBRS, SLED; Population estimates, B&CB ORS.



Of total arrests, 109 (0.7%) were Hispanic, 14,151 (92.6%) were Non-Hispanic and 1,030 (6.7%) were of unknown ethnicity. More Blacks were arrested for criminal firearm violence than any other racial category, followed by Whites. Asians and Native Americans accounted for less than 1%.

**Table 79**  
**Firearm Arrests by Race**

<b>Race</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Pct.</b>
Asian	32	0.2
Black	10,436	68.3
Native American	16	0.1
White	4,800	31.4

Note: There were 6 arrests classified as race unknown.  
Source: SCIBRS, SLED.

The firearm arrest rate for Non-Whites was higher than the arrest rate for Whites each year from 1996 through 1999. The overall arrest rate for Non-Whites was 4.8 times higher than for Whites.

**Table 80**  
**Firearm Arrest Rate by Racial Group**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Non-White</b>	<b>White</b>
1996	24.44	5.03
1997	25.40	4.94
1998	21.54	4.63
1999	19.42	4.17
Total	22.68	4.69

Note: Rate per 10,000 within the corresponding racial group.  
Source: SCIBRS, SLED; Population estimates, B&CB ORS.

The firearm arrest rate for males 9.3 times higher than the rate for females from 1996 through 1999.

**Table 81**  
**Firearm Arrests by Sex**

<b>Sex</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Pct.</b>	<b>Rate</b>
Female	1,584	10.4	2.01
Male	13,706	89.6	18.64

Note: Rate per 10,000 with corresponding sex.  
Source: SCIBRS, SLED.

Non-White males had the highest firearm arrest rate each year from 1996 through 1999. Overall, Non-White males had the highest arrest rate, followed by White males, Non-White females and White females.

**Table 82**  
**Firearm Arrest Rates by Race/Sex**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Non-White Female</b>	<b>Non-White Male</b>	<b>White Female</b>	<b>White Male</b>
1996	3.68	48.24	1.29	8.92
1997	4.38	49.50	1.40	8.64
1998	3.66	42.48	1.32	8.09
1999	3.13	38.05	1.03	7.43
Total	3.71	44.52	1.26	8.26

Note: Rate per 10,000 within the corresponding race/sex.  
Source: SCIBRS, SLED; Population estimates, B&CB ORS.

## Summary

Firearm violence in South Carolina consists primarily of aggravated assault and robbery. Criminal homicide makes up about 2% of the total, and forcible sex offenses account for even less. The victims of these violent crimes are disproportionately Black. They are also predominately male and are more often than not, members of young adult age groups. The victimization rate for minority males is much higher than any other group, except in forcible sex offenses.

These crimes are more likely to occur at a private residence than elsewhere, although much firearm violence also occurs on public thoroughfares. Criminal firearm violence occurs more often among strangers than any other victim to offender relationship group, while firearm violence among family members or within a romantic relationship is relatively infrequent. Handguns are much more likely to be the weapon involved in firearm violence than any other type of gun. The use of shotguns, rifles and other firearms constituted less than twenty percent of criminal violent firearm use. Although it is too short a time period to justify any meaningful discussion of trends, the rate of firearm violence victimization did drop from 1996 to 1999.

Similar to the victims, perpetrators of firearm violence are more often male than female and more often Black than White. Juveniles had a much lower arrest rate than adults, and generally the arrest rates were highest among young adults. A particularly noteworthy finding is the level of danger presented by these offenders not only to the victims but also to the apprehending law enforcement officers. Slightly more than 10% had firearms in their possession at the time of arrest.

A number of important issues could not be addressed by this report, but should be considered for future research efforts. The source of firearms is one such issue. Are these firearms being obtained through legal or illegal means? What is the criminal background of perpetrators of firearm violence, do they tend to be repeat violent or one-time violent offenders?

## Appendix A

### Criminal Offense Definitions

**Aggravated Assault:** An unlawful attack by one person upon another wherein the offender uses a weapon or displays it in a threatening manner, or the victim suffers obvious severe or aggravated bodily injury involving apparent broken bones, loss of teeth, possible internal injury, severe laceration, or loss of consciousness. This also includes assault with disease (as in cases when the offender is aware that he/she is infected with a deadly disease and deliberately attempts to inflict the disease by biting, spitting, etc.).

**Forcible Fondling:** The touching of the private body parts of another person for the purpose of sexual gratification, forcibly and/or against that person's will; or not forcibly or against that person's will where the victim is incapable of giving consent because of his/her youth or because of his/her temporary or permanent mental or physical incapacity.

**Forcible Sodomy:** Oral or anal sexual intercourse with another person, forcibly and/or against that person's will; or not forcibly or against the person's will where the victim is incapable of giving consent because of his/her youth or because of his/her temporary or permanent mental or physical incapacity.

**Intimidation:** To unlawfully place another person in reasonable fear of bodily harm through the use of threatening words and/or other conduct, but without displaying a weapon or subjecting the victim to actual physical attack.

**Justifiable Homicide:** The killing of a perpetrator of a serious criminal offense by a peace officer in the line of duty; or the killing, during the commission of a serious criminal offense, of the perpetrator by a private individual.

**Kidnapping:** The unlawful seizure, transportation, and/or detention of a person against his/her will; or of a minor without the consent of his/her custodial parent or legal guardian.

**Murder:** The willful (non-negligent) killing of one human being by another.

**Negligent Homicide:** The killing of another person through negligence.

**Rape:** The carnal knowledge of a person, forcibly and/or against that person's will; or not forcibly or against the person's will where the victim is incapable of giving consent because of his/her temporary or permanent mental or physical incapacity. (This does not include statutory rape.)

Robbery: The taking, or attempting to take, anything of value under confrontational circumstance from the control, custody, or care of another person by force or threat of force or violence and/or by putting the victim in fear of immediate harm.

Simple Assault: An unlawful physical attack by one person upon another where neither the offender displays a weapon, nor the victim suffers obvious severe or aggravated bodily injury involving apparent broken bones, loss of teeth, possible internal injury, severe laceration, or loss of consciousness.

Sexual Assault with an Object: To use an object or instrument to unlawfully penetrate, however slightly, the genital or anal opening of the body of another person, forcibly and/or against that person's will; or not forcibly or against the person's will where the victim is incapable of giving consent because of his/her youth or because of his/her temporary or permanent mental or physical incapacity.

Suicide: The intentional taking of one's own life.

## **Appendix B**

### **Overview of the Data Source**

The SCIBRS data set consists of the compilation of incident reports forwarded to SLED by local law enforcement agencies throughout the state. Whenever a criminal incident is reported to law enforcement, the responding officer fills out a Uniform Incident Report that is forwarded to SLED. The information in SCIBRS is drawn from this report. SCIBRS is fully compliant with the FBI's NIBRS requirements and has additional data elements as well that SLED has determined would provide useful information. Participation in NIBRS among South Carolina's law enforcement agencies has been virtually 100% since 1991, with the exception of the final quarter of 1995. Law enforcement agencies that do not report directly to SLED, report through other local law enforcement agencies, usually the Sheriff's Department of that county. For the most part, SLED receives paper incident reports and enters the data, determining the offense classification based on a review of the narrative describing the incident. For law enforcement agencies that have been certified to transmit their data electronically to SLED, the offense classification is made at the local level. Part of the certification process involves training to make reliable offense classifications. These classifications conform to NIBRS standards, and unfortunately, cannot be made to correspond to state offenses such as criminal domestic violence. The SCIBRS data are maintained in annual files, created after the previous year's data have been received and entered. However, SLED keeps each file open for an additional year to enable it to receive edits, additions, deletions and other corrections. As a result, there are two types of annual files: year end files which are the first version of the annual file, and purge files which are the final, corrected version of that file. This analysis accessed the end of year file for 1999. This file will be updated and finalized sometime during 2001 and many, if not all, of the totals will change.

## Appendix C

### County Criminal Firearm Incident Counts

County	1996	1997	1998	1999
Abbeville	53	71	80	27
Aiken	205	269	268	242
Allendale	25	22	35	33
Anderson	496	451	327	443
Bamberg	43	59	35	30
Barnwell	59	51	42	64
Beaufort	166	200	236	221
Berkeley	259	177	167	235
Calhoun	45	41	46	28
Charleston	980	933	758	763
Cherokee	172	147	149	150
Chester	107	132	69	99
Chesterfield	102	96	118	134
Clarendon	61	74	83	76
Colleton	138	129	93	100
Darlington	196	200	186	106
Dillon	194	177	206	85
Dorchester	135	125	123	129
Edgefield	64	59	40	22
Fairfield	106	118	107	71
Florence	256	288	343	332
Georgetown	194	154	161	134
Greenville	948	911	996	873
Greenwood	248	217	211	175
Hampton	41	41	36	40
Horry	518	598	593	504
Jasper	78	46	42	59
Kershaw	72	69	90	77
Lancaster	86	154	139	187
Laurens	242	177	203	145
Lee	63	44	39	47
Lexington	402	390	343	326
McCormick	24	24	18	15
Marion	111	122	104	83
Marlboro	159	179	158	160
Newberry	33	45	45	38
Oconee	84	71	72	66
Orangeburg	430	437	521	497
Pickens	65	95	105	110
Richland	1,224	1,373	1,040	1,272
Saluda	44	38	37	29
Spartanburg	1,012	1,012	889	804
Sumter	349	336	272	271
Union	64	45	44	43
Williamsburg	67	67	59	53
York	289	429	372	339

Note: Count does not include suicide or justifiable homicide.

Sources: SLED, SCIBRS; B&CB ORS, unpublished population estimates.

## Appendix D

### County Criminal Firearm Incident Rates

County	1996	1997	1998	1999
Abbeville	21.79	29.05	32.47	10.94
Aiken	15.48	20.18	20.00	17.87
Allendale	21.35	19.08	30.67	29.13
Anderson	31.72	28.43	20.35	27.21
Bamberg	25.76	35.59	21.28	18.42
Barnwell	27.44	23.43	19.25	29.38
Beaufort	15.81	18.65	21.44	19.56
Berkeley	19.65	13.21	12.14	16.51
Calhoun	33.26	29.71	32.69	19.66
Charleston	31.96	29.76	23.94	23.85
Cherokee	35.90	30.27	30.27	29.96
Chester	32.03	39.08	20.08	28.34
Chesterfield	25.30	23.60	28.73	32.27
Clarendon	20.08	24.10	26.97	24.60
Colleton	37.55	34.78	24.90	26.55
Darlington	30.03	30.42	28.04	15.94
Dillon	65.72	59.90	69.34	28.60
Dorchester	16.02	14.45	13.97	14.24
Edgefield	32.65	29.92	19.99	11.01
Fairfield	47.62	52.82	47.73	31.46
Florence	20.78	23.16	27.51	26.51
Georgetown	37.63	29.39	29.98	24.39
Greenville	27.51	26.08	28.14	24.32
Greenwood	39.32	34.32	33.18	27.46
Hampton	21.54	21.48	18.80	20.93
Horry	31.63	35.30	33.97	28.23
Jasper	46.79	27.07	24.62	34.24
Kershaw	15.27	14.43	18.51	15.62
Lancaster	15.11	26.66	23.61	31.39
Laurens	39.37	28.37	32.14	22.89
Lee	31.50	21.76	19.21	23.13
Lexington	20.58	19.45	16.73	15.60
McCormick	25.34	25.18	18.89	15.61
Marion	31.97	35.02	30.10	24.07
Marlboro	53.21	60.29	53.40	54.26
Newberry	9.66	13.14	13.07	11.05
Oconee	13.43	11.20	11.23	10.14
Orangeburg	49.24	49.89	59.40	56.79
Pickens	6.29	9.06	9.81	10.17
Richland	40.77	45.52	34.11	41.40
Saluda	26.04	22.45	21.71	17.08
Spartanburg	41.68	41.29	35.96	32.21
Sumter	31.42	30.16	24.21	24.11
Union	20.93	14.72	14.42	14.16
Williamsburg	18.00	18.05	15.95	14.39
York	19.74	28.53	24.11	21.43

Note: Rate per 10,000 unit of population. Rates do not include suicide or justifiable homicide.

Sources: SLED, SCIBRS; B&CB ORS, unpublished population estimates.